



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
Division of Spill Prevention and Response
Prevention Preparedness and Response Program
SITUATION REPORT (SITREP)

CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS SITREP ARE DENOTED IN RED

Tug *Western Mariner* Grounding Neva Strait



SITREP #: 6

SPILL #: 22119908001

DATE/TIME OF DISTRIBUTION: April 5, 2022, at 3:00 p.m.
Information current as of April 5, 2022, at 12:00 p.m.

POTENTIAL RESPONSIBLE PARTY (PRP): Western Towboat Co.

INCIDENT LOCATION: Neva Strait, approximately 18 miles northwest of Sitka (Lat/Long: 57.26982, -135.59315).

DATE/TIME OF SPILL: March 21, 2022, at 2:55 a.m.

HOW/WHEN SPILL WAS DISCOVERED AND REPORTED: On March 21, 2022, at 4:46 a.m., Western Towboat Co. reported the spill to the National Response Center. Western Towboat Co. reported that the spill occurred following the tug grounding.

TYPE/AMOUNT OF PRODUCT SPILLED: Western Towboat Co. reports that an estimated total of 5,307 gallons of diesel were spilled of the 43,500 gallons estimated to be onboard at the time of the grounding. 33,040 gallons of clean diesel was directly offloaded from the *Western Mariner* to secured storage tanks. On-water recovery operations and mixed oil/water pumped from the tug yielded an estimated 4,453 gallons of oil recovered. The volume of oil recovered from the water via skimming operations was an estimated 700 gallons. The total recovery amount of oil recovered from absorbent materials has not been determined yet, but 20 cubic yards of saturated absorbents have been generated.

CAUSE OF SPILL: The 83.7 ft. tug vessel, *Western Mariner*, was towing the freight barge, *Chichagof Provider*, headed south in Neva Strait outside of Sitka when a temporary steering failure onboard the *Western Mariner* caused the barge to collide with the tug. The collision pushed the tug onto the beach, resulting in the release of diesel.

SOURCE CONTROL: Source control has been achieved. Since March 24, 2022, no fuel has left the *Western Mainer*, and all fuel tanks aboard the tug were emptied as of March 26. The *Western Mariner* was safely towed to Sitka and is currently moored at the Samson Tug and Barge Facility dock.

RESPONSE ACTION: Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) has formed a Unified Command (UC) with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) and the responsible party, Western Towboat Co.

On March 28, 2022, the Shoreline Cleanup and Assessment Technique (SCAT) team completed formal beach surveys of the impacted shoreline near the *Western Mariner*. The team identified three areas within Neva Strait as lightly oiled and recommended a high volume, low pressure seawater beach deluge for the impacted areas.

SEAPRO mobilized equipment and commenced shoreline flushing operations **near the grounding site** on March 29, 2022. Operations **continued through April 2, 2022**. This activity **was** actively monitored by response personnel. **Absorbent materials and containment boom were initially used to capture any remnant oil from the shoreline flushing operations, but the absorbent pads were not effective in absorbing the weathered silvery sheen that was flushed from the shoreline. On April 3, 2022, with approval from the UC, SEAPRO personnel corralled the sheens with containment boom and mechanically dispersed the sheens with vessels and skimmers. Precautions were taken to minimize impacts to the natural shoreline, environment, and wildlife throughout the flushing operations and the mechanical dispersion operations.**

RESOURCES AT RISK OR AFFECTED: Pacific herring are currently aggregating and staging for spawning in the greater Sitka Sound area. Humpback whales, porpoises, sea lions, harbor seals, shorebirds, and eagles have been observed in the area, but no impacts to marine mammals or avian wildlife have been reported.

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) and ADEC issued several seafood safety recommendations for herring egg and other subsistence harvests.

On March 31, 2022, at around 9:30 a.m., SEAPRO conducted an overflight of the 11 areas identified by the UC as potential resources at risk. A heavily weathered, broken silver sheen was observed approximately 50-60 feet offshore near the Siginaka Islands, but no sheens were observed in any of the other areas of concern.

On April 4, 2022, the SCAT team revisited the three shorelines recommended for treatment within Neva Strait (depicted in Figure 3 of this report). Two of the three sites were recommended as No Further Treatment necessary. Shoreline agitation was recommended as an additional treatment option for the northern most site identified, as the flushing operations were observed to be less effective on the oil found within the lower intertidal sediments. On April 5, 2022, at around 10:00 a.m., response personnel mobilized to the grounding site and performed manual agitation along the shoreline.

FUTURE PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: Shoreline monitoring will continue, and the SCAT team is anticipated to return to the grounding site in the following weeks to provide further recommendations. The *Western Mariner* remains moored at the Samson Tug and Barge facility and is pending transit approval from the USCG.

WEATHER:

Tuesday, April 5th:

Mostly cloudy (80-90%) with widespread rain showers and snow showers early in the morning, then numerous rain showers the in morning. Scattered rain showers in the afternoon. Chance of precipitation is 80%. The max temperature is around 42 degrees Fahrenheit. West winds of 14 to 15 mph and gusts up to 24 mph. 0.24 inches of rainfall predicted.

Wednesday, April 6th:

Mostly sunny (40-50%) then becoming mostly cloudy (80-90%). Chance of rain and slight chance of snow in the morning, then rain in the afternoon. Max temperature around 46 degrees Fahrenheit. 0.11 inches of rainfall predicted. East winds 9 to 14 mph with gusts to around 39 mph increasing to around 21 mph with gusts to around 47 mph late in the afternoon.

Tides:

Date	Day	Time	Pred	High/Low
2022/04/05	Tue	03:44 AM	10.12	H
2022/04/05	Tue	10:25 AM	0.07	L
2022/04/05	Tue	4:47 PM	8.17	H
2022/04/05	Tue	10:15 PM	3.30	L
2022/04/06	Wed	04:15 AM	9.65	H
2022/04/06	Wed	11:06 AM	0.63	L
2022/04/06	Wed	5:33 PM	7.49	H

Products available at 9451741 WHITESTONE NARROWS, Neva Strait, AK

UNIFIED COMMAND AND PERSONNEL:

Incident Commander: Rich Christiansen, Western Towboat Co.

SOSC: Rachael Krajewski, ADEC

FOSC: CAPT Darwin Jensen, USCG

DATE/TIME OF THE NEXT REPORT DISTRIBUTION: As the situation warrants.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT: <https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/ppr/spill-information/response/>

Rachael Krajewski, State On-Scene Coordinator ADEC, (907) 465-6648

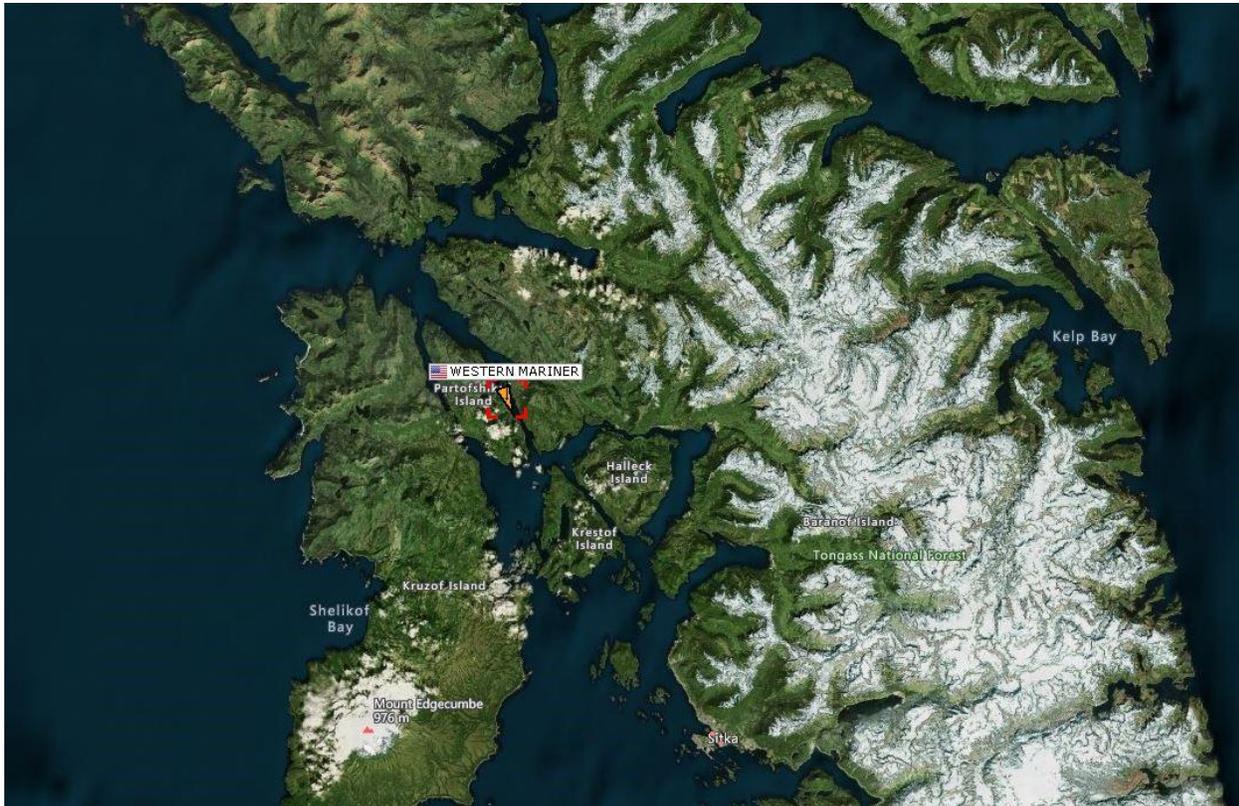


Figure 1. Incident Location.

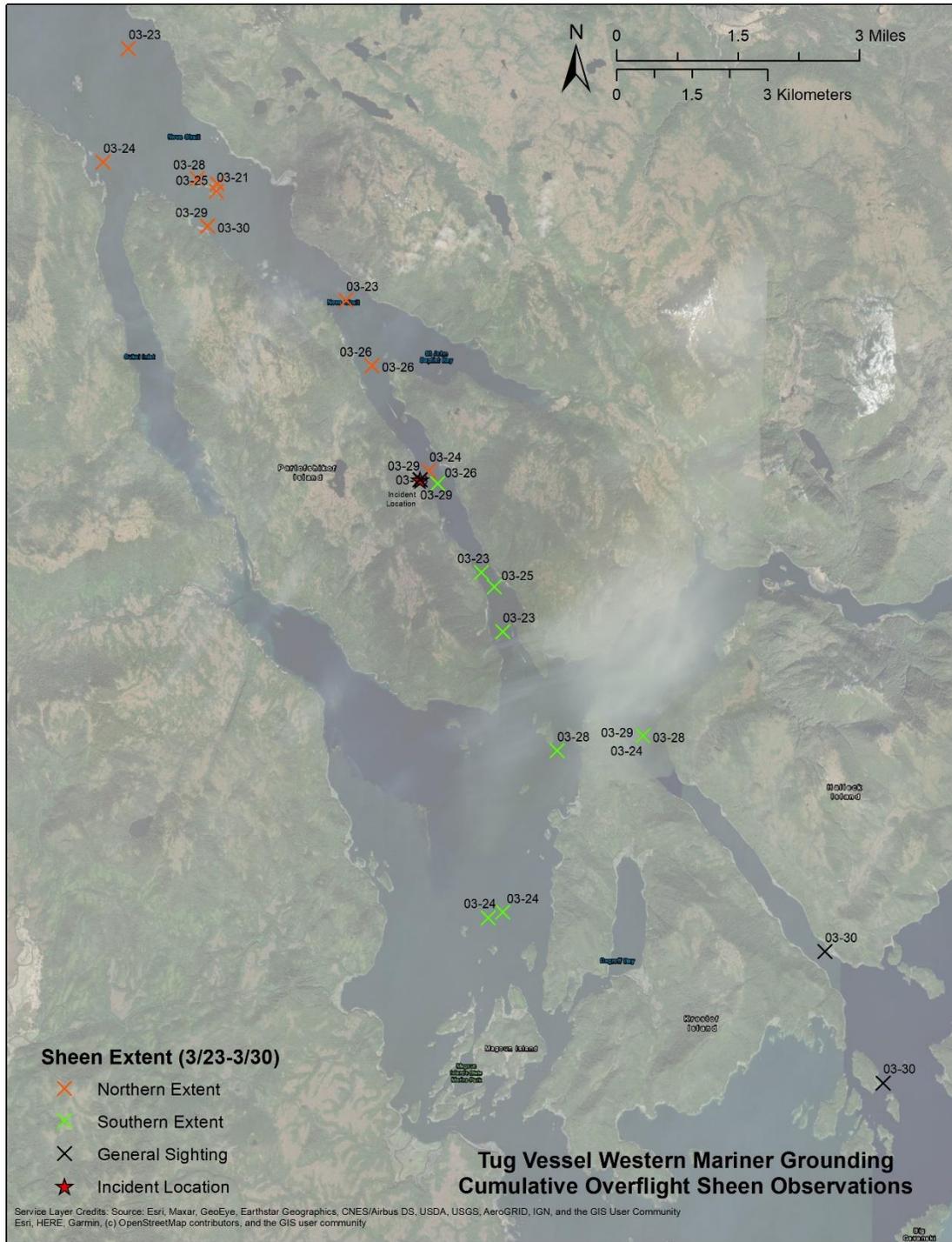


Figure 2. Image of the cumulative overflight sheen observations from March 23rd – March 30th, 2022. Image created by Polaris Applied Sciences, Inc.



Figure 3. Satellite image showing the shoreline flushing zones. Photo created by Polaris Applied Sciences, Inc. on March 29th, 2022.



Figure 4. Image of the SCAT Team conducting shoreline surveys in Neva Strait on April 4, 2022. Photo provided by ADEC.

AGENCY/STAKEHOLDER NOTIFICATION LIST:

Please refer to the previous SITREPs for the agency/stakeholder notification list. Previous SITREPs can be found by following the link in the **Additional Information** box above.